Responses to questions from Court members received by deadline of 26 November

Question 1
Could the time limit for submission of questions for the meeting be after the publication of the meeting agenda and associated papers? It is difficult to formulate a question 20 days before the meeting when the agenda has not been seen.

University’s response to Question 1
The letter from Lucinda Parr to Court members on 30 October drew a distinction between business to be raised at the meeting requiring twenty days’ notice and questions to Court requiring ten days’ notice. The letter also noted that where appropriate, questions would be responded to electronically outside of the meeting. The time limits are set with the purpose of ensuring the University has enough notice to respond to questions and agenda items. That said, we accept your point that it is difficult to formulate a question when the agenda has not been seen. In response we have made a note for Court 2020 to include more information on the agenda in the initial correspondence that we send out to members.

Question 2
“How is the University working with our Students' Union, Bristol City Council and residents groups to improve 'town and gown' relations in particular around issues related to Houses of Multiple Occupation.”

University’s response to Question 2
The University recognises that whilst the University and its students contribute significantly to the city’s vibrancy, cultural life and the wider local economy, the impact of University expansion had also led to increasing pressure on the city’s housing market and levels of rent, and in some areas a negative effect of noise pollution, and waste and recycling issues.

The University is clear about the importance of growing in partnership with the City and has worked extensively with the City Council and the Bristol Students’ Union to address all of those and other issues, in order to successfully achieve our collective ambitions for the city.

The contribution of the University and its students to the city is very substantial. The University is a major employer of Bristolians in a host of different roles. Directly and indirectly we contribute about a billion pounds a year to the local economy. This includes £250m each year spent by our students directly in the local economy, over and above the tuition fees the University spends. More widely, we also attract industry to the city-region (for example those that have set up in and spun out of the Engine Shed, and those based at the Science Park in and around the National Composites Centre). This model, in which the University operates facilities such as Engine Shed and the NCC on behalf of the city-region and its industries, is a key part of our collective civic future. The University is moving from providing ideas (from our research) and talented graduates (from our education), to working actively with external partners to invent solutions to society’s needs and providing the skilled people ready and able to implement those solutions. This will be at the centre of our ambitions in Temple Quarter – to co-create with our city an innovation district offering opportunities to all its people in the challenging and changing world of the 21st century. Delivering the Temple Quarter
Quarter Enterprise Campus is a critical enabler of success in the TQ Enterprise Zone - providing the talent and innovation to generate productivity and prosperity for our city.

That said, the University is committed to working proactively with the city of Bristol and in particular with the City Council to seek mutually beneficial solutions to the tensions described. We are agreeing the locations and scale of student housing development and the supporting infrastructure needed to reduce these tensions, and at the same time supporting and benefitting the local communities. We have made considerable progress in contributing positively to the development of the city as articulated in the emerging Local Plan which sets the planning framework for our collective future.

We encourage our students to be good civic neighbours and treat their neighbours and neighbourhoods with respect. We also recognise that this encouragement is not always reflected in students’ actions, and so we employ a dedicated community liaison team, with whom local residents can raise issues.

We acknowledge that public services are stretched, so where our students are causing distress to local residents, we make further investments. Specifically, in response to noise complaints we fund Operation Beech which sees local police officers patrol on certain nights of the week in areas of Redland and Clifton. The operation has already quietened down a number of student parties. Feedback from local residents has been that “The Beech patrol is highly effective and responsive.” We are also discussing actively with the City Council ways in which the University can contribute to effective waste collection particularly at key times such as when students move out each year, in addition to the awareness raising the we do with our students about re-cycling possessions that they no longer need.

With the development of the Temple Quarter Enterprise Campus, it will be important to retain the vibrant and diverse community which the University had already established across the different ‘campuses’, in particular ensuring that the transport links work effectively between the various sites. This will make it clear to students and members of the public alike that the University of Bristol is ‘one University’.

Additionally, University of Bristol students engage with the city in the following ways:

- University of Bristol students give up tens of thousands of hours for volunteering every year. Through our Students’ Union, students lead and take part in a range of projects, including work in primary schools across the city to help children with reading and writing and workshops that inspire pupils. They also run schemes to support disadvantaged young people and led befriending and support groups for older people.
- Bristol RAG (or Raising and Giving) is the fundraising arm of Bristol SU. Founded over 90 years ago to make a difference in the local community, it raises tens of thousands each year for local, national and international causes.
- Our students’ contribution to the community was recognised in 2016 when they received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service – the highest national award for volunteering.

**Question 3**

The University has an excellent reputation for its cutting-edge world-class research but within the United Kingdom it currently doesn't have the same impact with its teaching and learning as expressed through the National Student Survey. What measurers is the institution taking to focus on improving student satisfaction with learning and teaching at both the undergraduate and postgraduate taught level given the piloting of the Office for Students PGT Student Survey.
University's response to Question 3

The University is investing significant energy, resource and imagination to improve the educational experience of Bristol students. There are a number of interventions we are putting in place to ensure that our educational reputation aligns with our reputation as a world-leading research institution. The premise for our educational interventions is that there are pockets of excellent and innovative teaching happening in the curriculum in Bristol, but these are not consistently evident to students across all courses. Our interventions seek to ensure that whole programmes and departments make step changes together to enhance teaching, learning and assessment. We are doing three main things:

1. Undertaking a proven approach using TESTA (Transforming the Experience of Students through Assessment) on 18 programmes of study in 2019/20. TESTA is a research and change process which takes a programme view of assessment, using student voice and questionnaire data and negotiating evidence-led changes with programme teams based on clear educational principles. In other universities, it has helped to improve curriculum and assessment design.

2. Undertaking a National Student Survey intervention on 14 degree programmes in 2019/20, collecting final year student data in workshops, and bringing that back to programme teams with proven educational tactics to address problems students raise.

3. Leading an institutional curriculum review with all of our programmes over four years to hardwire a culture of innovative teaching and imaginative curriculum design into all practice and to build up lecturers’ capacity to use proven educational approaches.

To support these interventions, we have strengthened our staffing resource in the Bristol Institute for Learning and Teaching (BILT) and committed the BILT team to leading on systematic enhancements linked to student engagement, research informed teaching and inspiring professional development for all our staff. Currently new lecturers undergo professional development linked to the UK Professional Standards Framework through our CREATE (Cultivating Research and Teaching Excellence) scheme. We have brought CREATE into BILT to ensure a strong and systematic approach to strengthening learning and teaching across the piece at Bristol.

Question 4

Considering that the University is encouraging all staff and students to consider the environmental impact of commuting into the campus and encouraging individuals to take public transport or using ‘greener’ alternatives such as cycling. Bristol is ranked within the top 20 University bike theft hotspots in the UK (https://www.hiplok.com/university-bike-theft/) and I’ve heard stories about campus security not allowing theft victims to view security videos, thieves bringing portable electronic saws to cut through bike post and members of the university being in the bike shed when thieves are attempting to steal bikes, obviously putting university members in a risky position. My question to University Court is what is the University is doing to combat the significant number of bicycle thefts that are happening on campus, including from ‘secure’ card accessed bike sheds?

University’s response to Question 4

Background information:

- Recent travel surveys indicate that 16% of staff and 8% of students cycle to work/study. The figures we have for the period 16/17 academic year show 39 reported bike thefts (the 81 in the Hiplok report could include a number of bikes belonging to the general public and also non-university areas in the same postcode).
• UoB has the 11th largest estate size and is 18th by student FTE compared to the Hiplok survey that ‘ranks’ UoB at 19th
• We regularly review all crime at the university and compare it to local data - compared to the city centre and other comparable areas in Bristol, bike crime is relatively low.
• The incident in question with the portable saw was a one-off, where a particularly high-value bike located in a public place was targeted.
• With regards CCTV, we can’t show footage to victims of crime as this breaches GDPR legislation.

Existing facilities:
• A review has taken place on the installation fixings of existing Sheffield hoops and where necessary remedial work has taken place.
• A review has also taken place on the type of hoop that is installed. It has been determined the hoop currently used is the most appropriate and will therefore be continued for use.
• The GPR (Generic Project Requirements) is being reviewed regarding the installation fixings, along with lighting, natural surveillance and surveillance camera requirements.
• Surveillance camera requirements are site specific assessed. Cameras are not generally a deterrent and will not always assist Security in apprehending a suspect prior to/post a theft. However, additional CCTV is considered where it may have a preventive effect.
• Security carry out high-profile foot and vehicle patrols of the Clifton Campus.

New facilities:
• Sustainability is about to embark in a comprehensive strategic review of cycle parking, with the aspiration to significantly increase number on the Clifton Campus. Where possible, this will include enclosed facilities that will be available to staff and students.
• A strategic plan for cycle parking on Tyndall Ave is being generated to support the Library Public Realm project, which will result in additional parking spaces.
• The Library project will deliver 210 bike parking spaces. 180 of these spaces will be in an enclosed facility available to staff and students.

Campaigns and communication:
The bike theft reports that sustainability has received for this academic year, show that no bike was locked with a secure D-lock. NB, there was a small percentage of reports that did not state how the bike was secured. Therefore, the focus of our current campaigns is to raise awareness of correctly securing bikes.
• Sustainability and Security will continue to deliver awareness raising campaigns and events, with an increased frequency where feasible, such as:
  i. sale of discounted locks and lights to staff and students – the last event took place on the 5th November.
  ii. distribution of bike saddle covers with UoB security leaflets
  iii. distribution of specific UoB bike security leaflets
  iv. specific bike security awareness events, including free bike tagging to act as a deterrent
• Sustainability and Security are also looking at ways of improving communication with staff and students on bike security and crime prevention.

Question 5
Can you please explain the travel expense claim policy for members of Court travelling to Bristol by public transport?
University’s response to Question 5
The details below were also highlighted to all Court members when the members were given details about the papers on 27 November.

“We will be more than happy to reimburse any reasonable travel expenses incurred for this meeting which are in line with the University’s Travel and Subsistence Policy. However, as per point 5 in the Court Member Role Description, international travel will not be reimbursed. To raise a claim, please complete the attached form and return it electronically to governance@bristol.ac.uk (along with any associated receipts) within 8 weeks of the meeting.”

Question 6
What, if any, data is available on the characteristics of Court Members? For example, but not limited to, gender, disability and ethnicity. Following this, what measures, other than the allocation for international alumni among Elected Members, are being taken to ensure an appropriately representative Court?

University’s response to Question 6
“The University’s Court Reform Steering Group had regard to creating a diverse group of members for the reimagined Court and this intention was included both within and across the categories selected. That said we anticipate being able to have a more diverse Court in future years as we hope to have a larger pool of candidates to choose from and more time to approach potential candidates. In 2019 the University did not conduct diversity monitoring of Court members; however it is something that we intend to do in 2020.”